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## MAN ABNORMAL.

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**I**N the presentation of this subject, it will be necessary to consider heredity, insanity and imbecility. A question more vital, in so far as it relates to our well-being, could not be brought forward. When we take into consideration the thought that Jesus Christ, as he entered the arena of moral darkness, dispelled the superstition of the ages; that by this act he gave birth to a new era, which quickened the consciences of men and created in them a new life, a life filled with the light of science; that this life is penetrating or transforming many of the hidden mysteries into living truths, all things must be brought to a plane of natural laws.

The twentieth century evidently will be classed as the century of science. To-day we are confronted with the demand for definite knowledge, plain facts and demonstrable truths. Rapid progress was made along this line in the last half of the nineteenth century. Anthropology is no longer a dead letter of the past, and archeology has given us very many relics of a prehistoric character, while ethnology is pushing to the forefront; we also have sociology, at one time the dream of the idealist, but to-day a practical science—a science that demands more than a passing notice.

The new psychology is opening up the secrets and mysteries of the philosophy of ancient Egypt. It furnishes a definite science of mind, and, its methods being reliable, gives not only brain-building but soul-growth. To-day heredity is not considered as a myth but as a fact, a science; when, if applied in the light of the new psychology, it will serve as a potent factor in solving the problem of human progress. Heredity and psychology must of necessity revolutionize all methods. Heredity is universally admitted; it is a self-evident truth. To deny this would be entering a plea against existence. I am firmly of the opinion that all of our possibilities in life are inborn. A writer makes this statement: "The result of all recent research points to the conclusion that human beings are born into the world with a distinct bent of temperament and character which will always manifest itself in

some form, no matter what process of training the individual is called upon the undergo." Another says: "Every man is the outcome and product of his ancestry; this is true not only of the broad fundamental characteristics by which he is animal, by which he is human, by which he is natural, by which he betrays the country and family from which he proceeds, but extends to the trivial and minutely trivial characteristics by which he is distinguished from other individuals of his own race, country and family." Do we not find physical and mental peculiarities strongly manifested in very young children, even at an age when environment could not have produced any material effects upon them, and does not this suggest that they were inborn? If environments are the same, children will manifest widely different dispositions as to tastes, talents, etc. We must therefore conclude that inborn traits in a degree surpass environment; but you are not to infer from this that environment plays no part in the life of the child. Variation of child intellect of a necessity is inborn, hence not attributable to environment. If this be true as regards the intellectual powers of the child, is it not equally true of the physical? Heredity would therefore determine the natural trend of every one. Does not profane and sacred history confirm this statement? Instincts that are abnormal, as well as those that are normal, run through families and are classed under the head of hereditary transmission. The same law prevails when applied to plant or animal life. Flowers, fruits and vegetables are improved not only as to quality but quantity and variety. This is also true in the domestic animals. Man is denied, or, rather, does not apply, these laws of heredity to himself or succeeding generations, hence the offspring is a product of blind chance. We must not thus close our eyes and ears, refusing to listen to the voice of wisdom or our better judgment.

A child has an inherent right to be well born, and yet the per cent. that should be classed under this head is numerically very small. Nature's laws are ignorantly and, may I not add, wilfully set at naught, thus dumping upon society an increase of vice and crime. A knowledge of the laws of heredity and a compliance with them is the foundation of reform. Miss Willard once said: "If man is to overcome the evils of intemperance, children must be better born." What is true here is also an axiom in regard to all mental, moral and physi-

cal defects. Education, of necessity, is a factor in brain-building; it should therefore begin during or while the brain is forming, that it may become a part of it. Evil impressions, evidently, are made upon the mature mind; how much more susceptible, then, is the plastic and forming brain to impressions?

There are many factors which enter into this question of heredity that serve to unpopularize it; they are factors well understood by all. Man is the outgrowth of influences which begin in embryonic life; they are therefore prenatal and post-natal. Every factor in life is potential, and yet this degree of influence, by the very nature of things, must be varying, and hence cannot be absolute. The elements which enter into the formation of man's life can with propriety be divided into three separate and distinct divisions—generation, education, and regeneration, each one of which plays its part in the development of a well-rounded life, and man's character requires their uniform strength.

Every man is morally responsible for his acts, but cannot be equally so. Three conditions are essential in man's ability to do right—knowledge, desire for right, and self-control. The moral responsibility of each individual must depend upon these conditions. We must consider man as a creature of heredity and environment. This suggests the question of moral responsibility considered from a legal, a psychological and an ethical standpoint. Are we, then, responsible for errors of opinion? If so, to what extent or degree? Responsibility is denied by some, who claim that belief is controlled by rigid necessity; that there is a fixed and inexorable law that is or may be born in man which does control him. If this proposition be true, man is not only powerless but blameless. In contradistinction we have those who hold that all error involves guilt. With this class there is no exception to the general rule. A suggestive question is, Are either of these views correct; and, if not, to what degree are we amenable to a just law? Sin is the transgression of law and law is a decree. There is not a field but what is crowded with mistakes, hence we have widely different ideas suggested, each type being viewed from different standpoints. This diversity suggests intellectual error. If by occupation a man's mind becomes diseased this evil will be handed down to his children.

The nutrition of the whole body may be so interfered with that all the plastic material formed by the blood is vitiated and incapable of forming sound nervous tissue. When these abnormal conditions of the mind exist there will be a want of perfect nerve energy, which creates a consciousness that there is something wrong. This may be classed as a want of coordination of the mental faculties. If this be true there will be false reasoning and erroneous conclusions. Should there exist a morbid condition of the emotions, then the whole mental life of the individual is changed, and we have what may be termed a form of insanity or partial derangement of reason. Insanity consists of a derangement of the intellect and will, hence mental weakness. Is it not a truism that a large per cent. of the people are to a greater or less extent monomaniacs? The sin of some far-back time may so impair our faculties and conditions as to make it impossible, for our best efforts of to-day, that we may escape a given error. This error of necessity is criminal; and yet, what is plainer than the fact that the error is not culpable, it being one which we neither could avoid—in fact, could not have been avoided consistently with a discharge of duty? This perhaps is too general, and yet I can but feel that we are not worthy of blame for all mistakes and errors of opinion.

Will a perfectly moral man be exempt, and that absolutely, from all mistakes? Moral perfection, doubtless, would aid him in arriving at a more perfect conclusion, yet a morally perfect man could not avoid all mistakes; being governed by his limited faculties, such a man must of necessity judge from that which comes within his range of observation, having only appearances and probabilities to guide him. His range of observation, being limited to a greater or less extent, must be erroneous. Man is a finite being, having finite faculties, hence, a finite vision. Facts lying beyond his field of vision may be necessary to avoid a wrong conclusion. In the very nature of things our faculties are limited, therefore our understanding must be superficial; being superficial makes it a product of error. We are confronted with the promises of God to keep and guide the righteous. But are we to understand that this implies a perfect immunity from mistakes? I think not; it is shown by facts that such immunity has never been vouchsafed to man. Good men are often poor thinkers upon the ordinary things pertaining to life, and devout

Christians frequently manage their worldly affairs with less judgment than those of lower moral integrity. This being true, we are compelled to say that under God's correctness of opinion there is not a proportion to moral goodness alone; therefore, a good man might be perfect without immunity from mistakes. Hence we conclude that man is not responsible for all errors of judgment; that the extent to which he may be held responsible must be governed largely by the knowledge he possesses of secular and divine things. We should receive credit or condemnation, not for what we do or fail to do, but, rather, upon the plan of doing or failing to do our best. Divine law is in perfect accord with this statement.

The old idea that has been rung down through the ages for centuries, that God sends the children of all conditions, preordaining their lives, to me is not consistent with reason or divine law. It is a malicious idea, born of selfishness, and the father of many who are unfortunately born. Parents are responsible for the physical, mental and moral character of the child. The better element of society recognizes this truth and does not longer grope in darkness. It has been said that: "In science and law, ethics and religion, turn whichever way we may, man is bound by ignorance, fettered by prejudice and imprisoned by sin. Only as he knows the truth is he able to break the chains of ignorance, burst the shackles of prejudice, unlock the prison doors of sin and stand forth a free man." From the creation of man, down to the present moment, we find him through all the ages struggling for freedom. This condition can only be reached in a degree, and that through brain-building and soul-growth. This work must be persistent and long-continued that we may reach the desired results. Correct brain-building cannot be reached at a single bound. We must study that we may secure definite thinking, as this will produce a close observer and a more perfect thinker. Experience, if it develops a higher sentiment, must be conducive to character-building, and the converse is true when applied to vice or crime. We must continually keep before the child pure thoughts, high ideals and noble aspirations; when character is established under such a training these things become the governing factors of the life. Doctor DeMotte says: "The physical basis of a virtuous life is a network of trunk lines where the incoming waves of stimula-

tion, on reaching the cerebral hemispheres of the brain, find their well-worn tracks, with switches already set, leading to the God-given higher possessions of the soul-holy memories, pure imaginations, concentrated ambition, righteous judgments, and a will whose nerve connection with these higher faculties is so perfect that at once, unless the line of duty present complications requiring consideration, the commands for right conduct are flashed out through the outgoing nerve-tracks and instantly obeyed." General Wheeler, while in command at Santiago, beautifully illustrated this thought. When he saw the Spaniards fleeing before his forces he shouted, "Forward, boys, the Yankees are running." A brain-path had been established and the expression ran along that line. We find three essentials necessary in special training of the muscular system—definite purpose, vigorous and normal action, and regularity, stopping short of exhaustion. This method applied to the brain will develop and strengthen it. The same is true of character-building. (It would be interesting to continue these illustrations, but I feel that it is not necessary.)

Heredity includes all laws, factors and forces which enter into the origin and determine the character of the new life. Insanity, of necessity, comes under this head. What is it? Shakespeare said: "To define true madness, what is it but to be mad." This is not a definition; many attempts have been made to define insanity, but failure has crowned each effort. Perhaps we could say that insanity is but a manifestation of impaired and disabled brain mechanism in its relation to mental functions. I think the trend of medical progress is steadily in this direction. Scientific knowledge which enables one to generalize fundamental principles of universal applicability is comparatively a new phase of human development. I care not what our conclusion may be, it is evident that when the insane taint becomes established it is transmitted from generation to generation; that this condition exists until the family degenerate or are extinct. Doubtless a large per cent. of those who become mentally unbalanced are a product of neurotic, drunken, insane, feeble-minded, scrofulitic or consumptive parentage. If time would permit, we could enter into minute detail and establish, as we believe, the above hypothesis. Lambroso, a reliable authority, states that "insanity is frequently transmitted; that even in suc-

ceeding generations it appears in greater intensity, and that these cases are very numerous."

We are confronted with the fact that insanity is on the increase, and to an alarming extent. In A. D. 1880 there was 1 insane person to every 1200 people; in 1900 we find 1 to every 460—an increase of nearly three to one in twenty years. Insanity and imbecility give us to-day not far from 400,000 people in the United States, and it is shown that this number, through heredity, is rapidly on the increase. Is it not time, then, to call a halt and take an account of stock in trade? To ask ourselves this question—Whither are we drifting? To cast about us for a remedy? How can we stop this increase of the abnormal man? is the greatest problem which is before the people to-day. Health, virtue and honor must enter into and form a component part of our mental and moral nature, that the nations yet unborn may profit thereby. This problem stands out in bold relief, and it can be solved only through the channel of education. Make the people feel not only their individuality but their responsibility.

We have learned somewhat of the intensity of life but lack a knowledge of our responsibility. It is an axiom that the rights of every one are circumscribed by the welfare of others. This might be shown by the many and varied relations which morphine, tobacco, alcohol and numerous drugs sustain to feeble-mindedness or imbecility, if farther investigation along this line were desired.

Before closing this paper, it would be well to look just for a moment upon the abnormal man from a statistical standpoint. From 50 to 75 per cent. of all crime is the result of intemperance; 70 per cent. of all cases of insanity are charged directly or indirectly to narcotics; 80 per cent. of all criminals are habitual malefactors, and 40 per cent. of hereditary criminals are the result of bad maternal impressions—mother-made criminals. We see, therefore, that heredity, bad whisky and bad environments vie with each other for the trophy of crime.

Change is written on all things human; we have the spring-time of youth, followed by the hot summer of manhood, and the mellow autumn and dreary winter of old age and death. We are actors upon a stage; one generation plays its part, the scene changes and gives place to the next. Man is indeed a poor philosopher if he does not take into account this



ceaseless law. Habit, thought and customs of the people are ever changing. We must of necessity keep step to the march of progress. We must not become morbid and link ourselves to the dry bones of a dead past. Nor are we to live as though the future had no change in store for us. Plan for the future, prepare for it, and then, when new conditions arise, we will be able to adjust ourselves to them.

There are many ideas brought into the field of vision at this time, yet not admissible for our discussion. In this brief paper the desire has been to excite an interest along the line of farther and more complete investigation. To study the ideas suggested is but to be convinced. After a thorough investigation, should failure take the place of success, you can only "wait until the evening bells of time have ceased tolling and the morning bells of eternity break the intervening silence with their clarion notes. Then mount the great white throne, stand beside the Recording Angel, and, as the unending day of eternity sweeps on, observe the consequences. Watch that debauched, debased, pauper, idiotic, insane and criminal throng as it passes the Judge of Nations to receive its reward; there where the deformed limp; where the feeble-minded chuckle in silly mirth; where the epileptics froth in perioditic fits; where the insane rave with madness; where drunkards stand face to face with heaven's gate and see those awful words flashing from flaming swords, "No drunkard shall enter the kingdom of heaven"; there where scarlet women are cursing the mother that gave them birth, and hardened criminals stand shuddering on the crumbling cliff that o'erhangs the dark valley of death and despair; there where family ties are being severed forever and loved ones are parting to meet no more; there where heart-broken mothers, choked with sobs, plead against fate; there where cruel justice, blinding her eyes, closes the day of probation and places the seal of death upon every impenitent soul; there where angels weep and the pitying, pleading Christ begs to drink once more the cup of death and endure the passion of Golgotha's cross that erring man may be forgiven; there, in scenes like this, reckon the consequences and settle the plea for personal liberty." Settle, and forever, the great question of man abnormal.